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# CAMBRIDGEPORT

## Revitalization



# Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan

## Community Development Department



## Cambridge, Massachusetts





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The cover illustrates many of the industrial and commercial activities of the Cambridgeport revitalization area.

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*This plan is an important step towards the revitalization of Cambridgeport. It addresses the diverse needs of the community by providing a program of balanced development that includes housing, business development, open space, and transportation improvements.*

*The urban design plan illustrates coordinated development that will meet the goals for revitalization. Working together, the City and private investors can achieve redevelopment that will benefit the Cambridge community.*





*Aerial view of the Cambridgeport revitalization area, 1978 (Aerial Photos of New England).*



# Goals of the Plan

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*Underutilized land along Sidney Street is a dominant feature of the Cambridgeport revitalization area.*



**Cambridgeport is on the threshold of a new era. The early twentieth century witnessed the transformation of nineteenth century farms and marshland into a flourishing industrial area bordering residential and commercial development.**

**But in the last two decades, much of that industry vanished as Cambridgeport experienced the same industrial exodus that touched many of the nation's urban areas. Left behind were acres of land and buildings formerly used by industry.**

Over the last several years, the pace of reinvestment in older urban areas has quickened throughout the United States. In Cambridgeport, some of the old industrial buildings have been subdivided for use by the growing technical and service industries that have recently come to the area. Cambridgeport's location in metropolitan Boston and the nearness of prestigious academic and research facilities will continue to attract businesses. With over one-fourth of Cambridgeport's former industrial land now lying unused, the community welcomes reinvestment, but it wants to ensure that the kind and quality of redevelopment will make the neighborhood a better place to live and work.

Because of the likelihood of redevelopment, the Cambridge Community Development Department began a comprehensive planning study of Cambridgeport in 1979 to



**Boston Metropolitan Area**





evaluate the potential for growth, analyze development options that could benefit the area, and draw up a plan to guide future growth. Three years of research, meetings with neighborhood groups, and discussions of needs and goals have led to the Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan, presented in this publication.

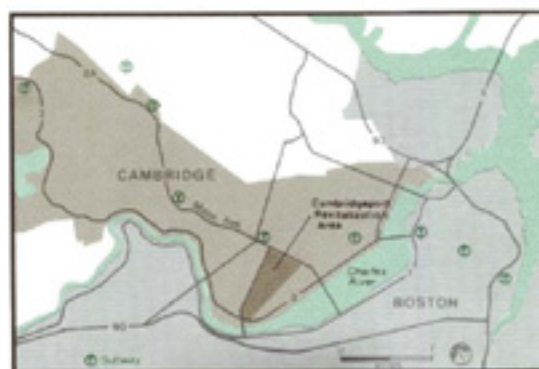
The goals of the plan are to:

- *promote the physical, social, and economic diversity of the neighborhood*
- *upgrade the physical and visual environment*
- *encourage balanced development.*

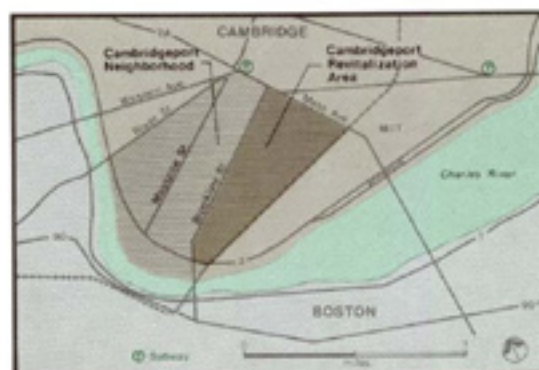
To achieve these goals, the City will make every effort to insure that redevelopment in Cambridgeport will bring new housing, expanded job opportunities, a broadened tax base, additional open space, improved transportation, and other benefits to the entire community.

The Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan presents recommendations to let developers know the kind of development that the City wants in the revitalization area. The plan presents specific development objectives, then suggests an urban design plan that illustrates a scheme for coordinated development. Finally, the plan reviews state and federal programs that can assist in funding development and proposes zoning changes

to guide development that will meet the City's objectives. By publishing the plan, the City of Cambridge is encouraging and guiding growth that will benefit Cambridgeport and Cambridge together.



City of Cambridge



Cambridgeport

The revitalization area covers about 100 acres, one-third of the Cambridgeport neighborhood. It is bounded by Massachusetts Avenue on the north, the railroad corridor on the east, Memorial Drive on the south, and Brookline Street on the west.





## Community Concerns

Many residents, landowners, and members of the business community contributed to the Cambridge Community Development Department's three-year planning study. The Community Development Department held a series of public meetings to discuss the community's needs and desires and to present background information on housing, economic development, traffic, and parks and open space. In addition, Community Development Department staff met frequently with residents, business leaders, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) representatives, and organized community groups.

While most participants agreed on the desirability of change and on the inadequacy of existing zoning, there was little consensus about the amount and kind of development that would be appropriate. Opinions differed on the relative importance of housing, jobs, recreational facilities, and return on investment. Although it is impossible to list all concerns and every point of view, the following discussion sums up the range of opinions that were expressed.

### Residents

The people who live in the Cambridgeport neighborhood are a diverse group, socially and economically. The area has long been perceived as a blue-collar, working-class neighborhood, but a 1980 survey\* found that over half of the employed residents hold professional jobs, while only 10% have industrial jobs. Other survey results indicated that more than half of Cambridgeport's adult residents have lived there for less than six years, while 39% have lived in the neighborhood for more than ten years.

The residents' concerns about redevelopment are as varied as their backgrounds. As neighbors of the revitalization area, they are aware of the need for development. Some are most concerned about the additional traffic that new activities may bring to nearby residential streets. Others advocate residential construction, but differ on

whether the housing should be market-rate or subsidized. Many residents welcome the promise of new employment opportunities, but want to ensure that some of those jobs will go to Cambridgeport residents. All have a strong incentive to participate in the planning process because their lives will almost certainly be affected by any major development in their neighborhood.



*Rehabilitation of houses reflects residents' desires to improve their neighborhood.*

\* Cambridge Community Development Department, Cambridgeport Industrial District Study, (1981), Chapter 10.



### Business

The business community in the revitalization area has a different but equally diverse set of concerns about redevelopment. Many companies have been conducting business there for years and have a substantial financial investment in the community. About 20% of the companies own the property they occupy. The rest lease space from MIT, Stimpson Properties, and a few smaller landowners.

According to a 1980 survey of business attitudes,\* local businesses consider Cambridgeport a desirable location and most want to remain there. They support redevelopment to make the area safer and more attractive for customers and employees, but they also worry that redevelopment will mean a loss of inexpensive rentals and question whether they could afford rents in new buildings.

### Landowners

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology owns about fifty acres in the revitalization area. Some of its buildings there are used for academic research, but most of the property is leased to private companies, is used for parking, or is currently vacant. MIT is working to develop its underutilized land in the area. The presence of MIT as both an owner and neighbor will certainly influence the kind of companies attracted to the area.

Most of the other landowners in the revitalization area support redevelopment, but do not anticipate major changes on their own property. Some worry that increased land values will inflate their property tax bills or that land will not be available for future expansion. Others welcome the physical improvements that redevelopment will bring to the area.

### City of Cambridge

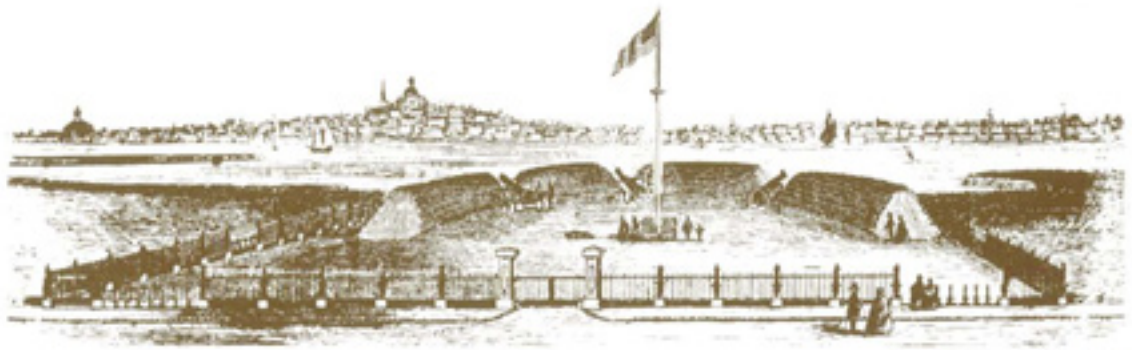
The City's role, as reflected in the actions of the City Council and public agencies, is to see that both community and city-wide needs are met. In drawing up this plan, the City has attempted to be sensitive to the many concerns that were voiced by residents, businesses, and landowners. The plan channels these important community concerns into proposals for change in the revitalization area.



*The Massachusetts Institute of Technology was founded in 1860 and moved to Cambridge in 1916. Shown here are the playing fields, Student Center, and Kresge Auditorium in the foreground with the main entrance on Massachusetts Avenue and the Center for Earth Sciences to the rear.*

\* Cambridge Community Development Department, Cambridgeport Industrial District Study, (1981), Chapter 3.





Fort Washington, c. 1860

## History

The Cambridgeport revitalization area has evolved from a scattering of farms and homes in the Revolutionary period, through the industrialization of the nineteenth century, to the mix of industries and growing research and development companies of today.

Settlement was sparse in the revitalization area before 1850. Most of the land was low and marshy except for a peninsula of high land that stretched down towards what is now Fort Washington. In 1775 George Washington constructed a three-gun battery at Fort Washington to guard against British naval raids. This is the only remaining fortification from the Siege of Boston that retains its original earthworks.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Grand Junction Railroad constructed a rail line through Cambridgeport and the swampy areas were gradually filled. Over the next

hundred years, many manufacturing companies, attracted by the availability of inexpensive land and ready access to the railroad, chose to locate in Cambridgeport.

By the mid-twentieth century, though, the area had slipped into an economic decline common to many urban industrial areas. As the railroads declined and trucking grew to be the primary means of freight transport, Cambridgeport lost one of its advantages as an industrial location.

In the 1950's, the interstate highway system was built, opening up rural land for development. An "inner belt" highway was proposed to connect interstates from the north and south of Boston. The highway would have cut through Cambridge, dividing Cambridgeport in half and taking land along Brookline Street. Groups throughout Cambridge were united against the highway and the proposal was eventually dropped.

About the same time, modern industries found that the old, multi-story warehouses typical of Cambridgeport were inefficient. Companies moved to areas where land was cheaper and more plentiful to build low-rise structures and large parking lots. In Cambridgeport, the most notable example was the Simplex Wire and Cable Company, which moved to Maine in 1969, leaving about twenty-five acres of land and buildings that were subsequently purchased by MIT.



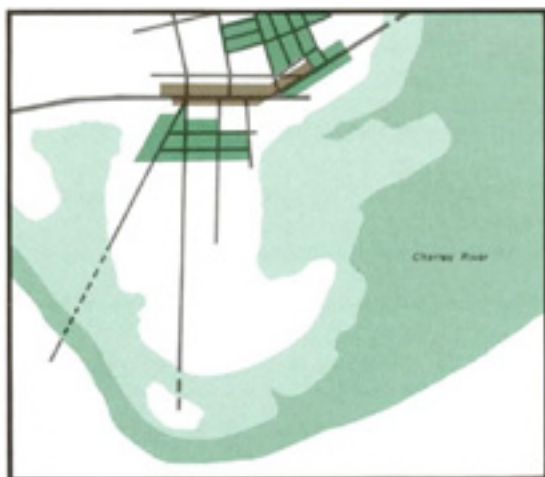
The construction of the Grand Junction rail line encouraged development in the industrial area.



The Simplex Wire and Cable Company moved to Cambridgeport in 1888. This building dates from 1922 (Cambridge Historical Commission).



The Ford Motor Company built this factory in 1913 to assemble, store, and service Model T Fords (Henry Ford Museum, The Edison Institute).



Cambridgeport, c. 1815



Cambridgeport, c. 1865

#### Evolution of Cambridgeport

##### Map Legend

- Residential
- Commercial/Industrial
- Institutional
- Marsh

These maps show changing land uses in Cambridgeport over the last two centuries. The period of greatest population and industrial growth was in the last half of the nineteenth century. During this time, factories were built on filled swamp land next to the rapidly growing residential area. The maps are based on the Cambridge Historical Commission's Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge.



Cambridgeport, c. 1916



Cambridgeport, c. 1966



## Prospects for Change

Over the last twenty years, as traditional manufacturing firms have left the Cambridgeport revitalization area, small new companies have moved in, setting up research and development facilities in the vacated industrial buildings. Many of the



businesses grew out of research being conducted at MIT. One of the first of these companies was Manlabs on Erie Street, which began in the 1950's and today designs prototype instruments for technical and scientific applications.

This pattern of reinvestment remains strong as high technology companies move into renovated industrial buildings in the Cambridgeport revitalization area. American Science and Engineering, a scientific research and manufacturing company, recently renovated the former St. Johnsbury Trucking terminal next to historic Fort Washington. Two industrial buildings on Albany Street have been renovated for use by Kurzweil Computer Products, which manufactures reading machines for the blind, and Cambridge Research Laboratory, a medical technology research company. Renovated buildings on Sidney and Emily Streets have been leased to Kloss Video Corporation, which manufactures large-screen projection television sets.

These companies have brought a new look and vitality to the area, providing jobs for over 500 people. Growth is beginning in the residential sector as well with the construction of townhouses at the corner of Putnam Avenue and Sidney Street.

The biggest changes are still in the future. MIT is actively planning to develop twenty-seven acres of land it owns between Massachusetts Avenue and Pacific Street. Preliminary plans were outlined in a request for proposals that was mailed to developers in March, 1982. The plans suggested construction of a hotel, offices, research and development facilities, and housing.

Development momentum is growing in the Cambridgeport revitalization area, underscoring the need for a plan to ensure that growth reflects the community's goals for the area. The Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan presents development objectives and an urban design plan to guide development, so all members of the community can benefit from the anticipated changes in the area.



*These former industrial buildings have been renovated for use by research and development firms.*



*Townhouses on Putnam Avenue (Joan Levy).*



### Land Use

#### Map Legend

- Industrial
- Parking/Vacant
- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Parks

Current land uses are indicated on this map, which clearly shows the juxtaposition of industrial and residential uses and the large amount of undeveloped land. Industrial uses include both manufacturing facilities and warehouses.



# Revitalization Objectives

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■ *The Cambridgeport revitalization area is one of the few parts of Cambridge with acres of vacant land. The opportunity for extensive redevelopment means that decisions on how the land should be used and the public benefits that should accompany development take on added importance.*

Over the last three years, members of the Cambridgeport community and representatives of the City have met to discuss how development can meet their goals. From those discussions and research on the Cambridgeport community, the City has established development objectives for housing, business development, parks and open space, and transportation in the revitalization area.

## Housing

Although the revitalization area constitutes more than a third of the land in Cambridgeport, only 10% of the neighborhood population (about 800 persons) live within its boundaries, mostly near Brookline Street. Because the effects of development are felt throughout the community, this discussion of housing conditions and needs covers the entire Cambridgeport neighborhood.

### Housing Characteristics

There are 4100 dwelling units housing 8670 persons in Cambridgeport; 20% of those units are owner-occupied.\* The types of homes are varied, including single family homes, row houses, three deckers, and brick apartment buildings. About 80% of the structures are one-, two-, and three-family dwellings.

Cambridgeport has 630 units of subsidized housing, which are 15% of all dwelling units in the neighborhood (the city-wide average is 11%).\*\* It ranks second among Cambridge's neighborhoods in the number of subsidized units. Two-thirds of those units are for elderly tenants. Over 80% of all subsidized units are in three apartment buildings constructed since 1970 – 808 Memorial Drive, Frank Manning, and Lyndon B. Johnson. None of the subsidized housing is in the revitalization area itself.



Most homes in Cambridgeport were built before 1920.



\* U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population and Housing, 1980*.

\*\* Cambridge Community Development Department, *Cambridgeport Industrial District Study*, (1981), Chapter 9.





### Housing Issues

The demand for housing is high throughout the City of Cambridge. Opportunities for housing construction are severely limited by the scarcity and high price of land. Students from schools all over the Boston area live in Cambridge, adding to the demand for moderately priced housing. Projected construction and rehabilitation of commercial, office, and industrial buildings will draw more people to Cambridge, increasing the demand for housing in Cambridgeport and surrounding neighborhoods.

Housing in the Cambridgeport revitalization area already faces problems arising from the juxtaposition of residential and industrial uses. Persons living next to industrial areas are often subject to truck traffic, machinery noises, and other characteristics of industry that are incompatible with residential neighborhoods.

### Housing Objectives

The Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan supports housing construction and rehabilitation to help satisfy the demand for housing in Cambridge. The location of both residential and business development can be planned to reduce land use conflicts in the Cambridgeport revitalization area. The following objectives support housing that encourages the continued diversity of the neighborhood while remaining compatible with the residential and business community that is now in Cambridgeport.

- New housing should be available for households of all income levels to reflect the neighborhood's diverse population.
- Housing for low- and moderate-income households should be mixed with market-priced housing wherever possible.
- Rehabilitation of existing homes and reuse of suitably located vacant industrial buildings for housing should be encouraged.
- New construction should provide housing units in a range of sizes to accommodate both small and large households.
- Apartments suitable for the elderly should be included in large-scale housing developments.
- Housing for both renters and homeowners is desirable.

- The density of new housing should be similar to that of the adjacent residential neighborhood. Near Massachusetts Avenue, a greater density of development would be appropriate.
- The location and design of new housing should reinforce the existing residential area and reduce the problem of incompatible uses.



The proximity of housing and industry can cause problems for both residents and businesses.



## Business Development

### Industry and Commerce

Over 100 business establishments make up the industrial and commercial community in the Cambridgeport revitalization area. The manufacturing companies in the area make a variety of products ranging from dentures, candy, and shoes to film, projection television tubes, and reading machines for the blind. Commercial businesses extend along Massachusetts Avenue and Brookline Street, with a small neighborhood retail center at the corner of Brookline Street and Putnam Avenue. Retail and service businesses include furniture, jewelry, automobile parts and repair shops, and restaurants.

Many of the research and development firms in the revitalization area were started by persons with ties to MIT, Harvard, or other Boston area universities. While these companies specialize in research and product development, several also have manufacturing facilities that provide both professional and industrial jobs.

### Employment

Companies in the Cambridgeport revitalization area now provide about 4000 jobs, representing 5% of all Cambridge jobs. About 57% of the positions are in manufacturing and 25% are in service industries; city-wide, the proportions are almost reversed, with 23% in manufacturing and 53% in service.\*

To compile an employment profile of Cambridgeport residents, the Cambridge Office of Manpower Affairs surveyed 1281 neighborhood residents by telephone in 1980.\*\* The results show a well-educated population; over 80% have graduated from high school and over 45% have completed at least four years of college. Fifty-eight per cent of Cambridgeport residents 16 years old and over are in the work force; 7% of those persons were unemployed at the time

\* Cambridge Community Development Department, Cambridge Directory of Establishments, (1980).

\*\* Cambridge Community Development Department, Cambridgeport Industrial District Study, (1981), Chapter 10.



Stefani House of Pizza, a family-run restaurant, is typical of small businesses in Cambridgeport.



An employee at Kurzweil Computer Products instructs a client in the use of a reading machine for the blind.



Upholstery Modes, a furniture manufacturing company, renovated its turn of the century industrial building in 1982.

of the survey. Of those who are working, more than 50% hold professional jobs, 18% are in clerical or sales positions, 11% are in service jobs, and 10% hold industrial jobs (processing, machine trades, benchwork, and structural work). The survey can be an important tool for attracting new businesses to Cambridgeport because it documents the presence of a well-educated labor supply with a wide range of job skills.

City-wide planning for economic development is most concerned with expanding the property tax base and providing jobs for Cambridge residents. In 1980, the City Council adopted an employment plan for the Alewife revitalization area. The plan promotes the hiring of Cambridge residents by enlisting the aid of private industry. New companies are encouraged to give priority to Cambridge residents in filling job openings. A similar employment strategy is being used in other development areas of the City and should be extended to the Cambridgeport revitalization area as well.

#### **Business Development Objectives**

The Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan supports business development by encouraging new firms to move to the revitalization area and established firms to strengthen their investment in the area. The following objectives encourage desirable business development.

- *Businesses now in the Cambridgeport revitalization area should be encouraged to remain.*
- *Both commercial and industrial companies should be recruited to provide a healthy economic base.*
- *Special emphasis should be placed on attracting businesses that provide Cambridge residents with employment opportunities encompassing a broad range of skill and educational levels.*
- *Inexpensive office and manufacturing space should be available for companies just getting started.*
- *Manufacturing uses should be located away from residential areas or should provide appropriate buffers to avoid problems arising from incompatible land uses.*
- *The scale of development should be compatible with nearby structures. In particular, tall buildings and high-density development should be located away from existing residential areas.*



*Many kinds of jobs are provided by businesses in the revitalization area.*



## Parks and Open Space

Much of the revitalization area appears bleak; industrial buildings are interspersed with vacant lots covered with weeds and debris. The streets are lined with dilapidated lighting fixtures and utility poles, while overhead there is a canopy of criss-crossing wires. In contrast, the nearby residential area has many tree-lined streets with well-maintained homes and gardens.

### Existing Parks

The Cambridgeport neighborhood has eight small parks and playgrounds in addition to Magazine Beach, a seventeen-acre recreation site on the bank of the Charles River. Two of the parks – Fort Washington on Waverly Street and Fulmore Playground (Peters Park) on Sidney Street – are located within the revitalization area.

Fort Washington is a one-acre historic landmark with remnants of Revolutionary period earthworks and a gun battery. Under the direction of the Cambridge Historical Commission, the wrought-iron fence and gate dating from 1860 have been reproduced and the park was landscaped. The park has not been used much in recent years because of its isolated location in the industrial area. However, with the departure of the St. Johnsbury Trucking Company and the arrival of new businesses in the area, use of



the park has grown. Peters Park, in the residential section of the revitalization area, is frequently used and features a playground and basketball court.

Near the southern end of Brookline Street is Hastings Square, a park with benches and tall shade trees, ringed by large Victorian homes. The park is used mostly by nearby residents. The other parks and playgrounds – Old Morse Playground, Lindstrom Field, Lopez Street Playground, Dana Park, and Alberico Playground – are located throughout the western part of Cambridgeport. They provide facilities for children and teenagers, including tot lots, tennis and basketball courts, sprinklers, and a baseball field.

### Recreational Needs

Cambridgeport has more recreational facilities than many of the City's neighborhoods, although the amount of land devoted to parks still does not meet nationally recommended standards. City-wide, the most clearly defined recreational need is for a two- to five-acre park with playing fields and



Historic Fort Washington is the largest park in the revitalization area.





facilities for organized sports. The Cambridgeport revitalization area is one of the few places left in Cambridge where such a large tract of underutilized land is available.

### Parks and Open Space Objectives

Improvements in open space and recreational facilities are needed in the Cambridgeport revitalization area to make the physical environment more attractive for the benefit of Cambridgeport residents and employees.

- *The appearance of public ways should be improved by planting trees, repairing or replacing lighting fixtures, and, where possible, relocating utility wires underground.*
- *Developers should include landscaping and open space areas on their project sites.*
- *New buildings should be carefully sited and landscaped to avoid the problem of conflicting land uses.*
- *Existing parks should be upgraded on a regular basis with landscaping and new equipment.*
- *An on-grade pedestrian crossing of the railroad tracks should be constructed to link the Cambridgeport revitalization area with recreational facilities along the Charles River.*
- *Land should be acquired for a large park with recreational facilities to serve Cambridge residents.*



### Park Locations

*Most of the parks serving the revitalization area are located within a few blocks of Memorial Drive. New recreational facilities are needed closer to Massachusetts Avenue.*



*Hastings Square is used by residents of all ages.*



*Peters Park is a popular playground for children.*



## Transportation

The roadway system in the Cambridgeport revitalization area is typical of older industrial areas. The streets and sidewalks are in poor condition; in some blocks there are no sidewalks separating buildings and streets.

Railroad tracks owned by Conrail run along the eastern edge of the area, but no more than one freight train passes each day. However, the line is essential, providing the only connection in the Boston metropolitan area for freight traffic from the Boston and Maine rail system in the north with the Conrail system to the south. Railroad sidings, mostly abandoned and overgrown with weeds, link industrial buildings with the main Conrail tracks.

### Existing Traffic

Motor vehicle access to and from the revitalization area is adequate now, but heavier traffic in the future could create problems. The area is bounded on the north by Massachusetts Avenue, which is heavily travelled by commuters, shoppers, and delivery trucks. To the east are the Conrail tracks. On the south are Memorial Drive and the Boston University Bridge. To the west is the residential neighborhood with narrow streets that are only suitable for local traffic.

Traffic counts taken in 1980 and 1981<sup>\*</sup> indicate that the streets within the revitalization area handle traffic reasonably well, with some congestion at intersections on the periphery during commuting hours. However, the width and pattern of streets limit the amount of additional traffic that can be absorbed.

The type of traffic in the area is varied: trucks and cars with business there, vehicles seeking shortcuts through Cambridge, tow trucks, and automobiles belonging to local residents. Since trucks are not allowed on most of Memorial Drive, they must travel through part of the residential neighborhood to reach the industrial area from major highways. In addition, fairly heavy traffic is generated by two towing companies.

Public transportation serves the area with bus routes along Brookline Street on the western edge and Massachusetts Avenue on the north. The upper portion of the area is within walking distance of the Central Square subway station.

<sup>\*</sup> Cambridge Community Development Department, Cambridgeport Industrial District Study, (1981), Chapter 8.



*Truck traffic on residential streets is a problem in the neighborhood.*



*An average of 100 cars are towed daily to Cambridgeport.*

### Traffic from New Development

New development in the Cambridgeport revitalization area, along with projects under construction in Kendall Square and East Cambridge, will increase traffic levels throughout the eastern half of Cambridge, placing an added strain on the Cambridgeport roadway system. Long-range traffic plans should be guided by the type of development expected. For example, offices and retail stores generate more traffic than residential and industrial uses. The expected mix of vehicles also depends on the uses: wholesale and warehouse businesses are served by delivery vans or trucks, while other uses generate mostly automobile traffic.

### Transportation Objectives

Transportation improvements are needed to encourage new development in the revitalization area and to handle the traffic that development will bring.

- Roadways should be repaved or reconstructed where needed throughout the area.
- Motor vehicle access to the area should be improved.
- The capacity of the revitalization area to handle traffic should be increased relative to the traffic expected from new development projects. Widening streets, changing traffic signals, and improving intersections will be necessary. The construction of new highways is neither desirable nor financially possible.
- Traffic patterns should be altered to discourage through traffic and the use of residential streets by commuter and truck traffic.
- Additional public transportation through the revitalization area should be provided to alleviate traffic increases from new development. Future use of the railroad corridor for public transportation should be considered.
- Walking and bicycling should be encouraged throughout the area. Access should be improved by repairing and constructing sidewalks and by building an on-grade pedestrian and bicycle path across the railroad tracks.



### Roadway Pattern

Vehicular travel to and from the development area should be distributed among Brookline, Sidney, Landsdowne, and Albany Streets, with business traffic routed away from residential areas.



Many of the streets and sidewalks are in disrepair.



# The Urban Design Plan



*The urban design plan is the heart of the Cambridgeport Revitalization Plan. It illustrates development that meets the revitalization objectives for housing, business development, parks, and transportation. The urban design plan details how redevelopment will benefit Cambridge, as well as the Cambridgeport community.*

The plan is based on design principles that support the revitalization goals for Cambridgeport; these principles include coordinated design and adaptive reuse of available buildings. The proposed location and mix of new development are essential for orderly growth in the revitalization area.

## Design Principles

The urban design plan illustrates a coordinated design for a range of land uses, building densities, and scales of development on sites throughout the 100-acre revitalization area. In addition to proposing appropriate development for individual sites, the plan shows the visual coherence that can be achieved by a system of plazas, parks, and landscaped streets and parking areas.

Relating the design and physical features of buildings (height, density, bulk, building materials, site orientation, ease of access, and parking) to those of nearby structures is an important part of the urban design plan. Developers and architects should consider how their designs contribute to the neighborhood. For example, the height and bulk of new buildings should not overshadow surrounding properties, and the total amount of new development should not appear to overwhelm nearby residential areas.

Renovation of old buildings strengthens the historic character of Cambridgeport. Many industrial and commercial buildings in the

revitalization area are architecturally and historically interesting. Three landmarks are the Ford Assembly Plant (now used by Polaroid), the Kennedy Building (Cambridge Furniture), and the New England Confectionery Company building (the home of Necco Wafers). Several structurally sound, nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings line Landsdowne and Albany Streets. The possibility of renovating those and similar buildings in the area should be explored.

## Potential Development Sites

Most of the development proposed by the urban design plan is for sites which are now vacant or used for parking; in a few cases, new development is shown on properties where current uses are likely to change.\* On sites with existing buildings, the architectural and historical quality of the buildings and their structural condition are considered. Prior to the development of sites now used for parking, arrangements for replacement parking may be necessary.

Revitalization will be phased over a long period – perhaps ten or twenty years. Some sites will undoubtedly attract developers' interest sooner than others. Whatever sequence the development process follows, the design principles embodied in the Cambridgeport urban design plan will ensure an overall order to the appearance and character of the area as it changes.

\* See Appendix for more information about development sites, ownership, and businesses.



#### Potential Development Sites

Of the 100 acres in the study area, about one-fourth have immediate development potential. These sites are mostly over an acre in size. Other factors that contribute to development potential are the site's availability for development, ownership, location, transportation access, and adjacent land uses.





## Urban Design Plan

The urban design plan illustrates development designed to meet the objectives presented in the previous chapter.

### Housing

Low-density housing at the same scale as the surrounding neighborhood is appropriate along the upper section of Brookline Street between Franklin and Pacific Streets and further down Brookline Street at Henry Street. Medium-density housing is shown on the west side of Sidney Street between Green and Franklin Streets. Housing could also be part of an eventual rehabilitation of the Ford Assembly Plant building.

### Business Development

A range of business activities is illustrated throughout the revitalization area. Retail stores, a hotel, offices, and housing are shown near Massachusetts Avenue. Between Franklin and Pacific Streets, the urban design plan shows research and development facilities. A lower scale of development from Pacific Street to Putnam Avenue features light industry and limited office use. The renovation scheme for the Ford Assembly Plant building provides both offices and housing.

### Parks and Open Space

A park is illustrated in the upper part of the revitalization area, where there is a greater need for recreational facilities than in areas closer to the Charles River and Magazine Beach. The park can also act as a buffer between the residential area and commercial and industrial uses. Street trees and properly landscaped and screened parking lots can serve the same purpose while making the neighborhood more attractive.

### Transportation

The plan will require a traffic circulation pattern to serve the needs of new development without encouraging traffic through the neighborhood. By widening some streets and adapting the pattern of one-way streets and traffic signals, the traffic-handling capacity of the revitalization area can be increased. Street extensions are suggested to improve the flow of expected traffic: Pacific Street across the railroad tracks to Vassar Street, and Waverly and Sidney Streets through the Ford Assembly Plant parking lot to Brookline Street.